

V I E W
OF THE
HISTORY, LITERATURE, AND RELIGION
OF

THE HINDOOS:

INCLUDING
A MINUTE DESCRIPTION OF
THEIR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS,
AND
TRANSLATIONS FROM THEIR PRINCIPAL WORKS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

BY THE REV. W. WARD,
ONE OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARIES AT SERAMPORE, BENGAL.

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To the Memory of

THE REV. SAMUEL PEARCE, OF BIRMINGHAM;

THE REV. JOHN SUTCLIFF, OF OLNEY;

AND

THE REV. ANDREW FULLER, OF KETTERING;

and to

THE REV. JOHN RYLAND, OF BRISTOL;

THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT, OF HEPDEN-BRIDGE;

AND

THE REV. ROBERT HALL, OF LEICESTER;

and to

THE REV. WILLIAM CAREY,

AND ALL THE OTHER EUROPEAN AND OTHER
COLLEAGUES OF THE AUTHOR IN INDIA;

THIS WORK IS VERY AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

BRAMFORD, June, 1815.

PRONUNCIATION OF HINDOO NAMES.

IN endeavouring to give the sounds of Sūṅskritā words, the author has adopted a method, which he hopes unites correctness with simplicity, and avoids much of that confusion which has been so much complained of on this subject. If the reader will only retain in his memory, that the short ū is to be sounded as the short o in son, or the u in Burton; the French é, as a in plate; and the ēē as in sweet; he may go through the whole work with a pronunciation so correct, that a Hindoo would understand him. At the beginning and end of a word, the inherent vowel (ū) has the soft sound of au.

ERRATA.

Vol. I. p. lxxxvi. l. 9. *for* "adorating," *read* "adoring."

— p. 9. l. 7. *for* "eight," *read* "eighth."

— p. 256. l. 12. *for* "fled," *read* "fled away."

Vol. II. p. 138. l. 3. *for* "Bristol Hot-wells, with all its gilt crutches,"
read "the warm waters at Bath, with all the gilt crutches."

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* In this Introduction, the author has gone over the whole of the Hindoo Pantheon, that he might supply a number of omissions in the body of the work; and hence it forms an epitome of the whole.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

ON THE

HINDOO RELIGION.

THE whole system of Hindoo theology is founded upon the doctrine that the Divine Spirit, as the soul of the universe, becomes, in all animate beings, united to matter; that spirit is insulated or individuated by particular portions of matter, which it is continually quitting, and joining itself to new portions of matter^a; that the human soul is, in other words, God himself; that the knowledge of this, leading men to seek complete deliverance from the degrading and polluting influence of material objects, is the only means of being reunited to the divine nature; that this deliverance from matter may be obtained in the present state by separation from human intercourse, the practice of

* There are two opinions among the Hindoos on this subject; some philosophers maintaining, that it is one soul which is united to sentient creatures; while others support a contrary opinion, and affirm, that human souls must be emanations from the Great Spirit, otherwise, when one person obtained absorption into the divine nature, all would obtain it at the same moment. The védantü philosophers teach, 'that God exists in millions of forms, from the ant to Brümha, the grandfather of the gods, as one moon is seen at once in twenty different pans of water.'

The agreement betwixt these opinions and those of the Greek philosophers is very remarkable:—'Almost all ancient philosophers agreed in admitting two principles in nature, one active and the other passive; but they differed in the manner in which they conceived these principles to subsist. Some held God and Matter to be two principles, which are eternally opposite; not only differing in their essence, but having no com-

bodily austerities, and entire abstraction of mind; and that, if not obtained in one birth, it is to be sought through every future transmigration till obtained.

This doctrine is taught in many parts of the Hindoo writings, especially in the *Dūrshūnūs*; which works, though almost

mon principle by which they can be united. This was the doctrine taught by Anaxagoras, and after him by Plato, and the whole Old Academy. This system, for the sake of perspicuity, we will call the Dualistic system. Others were convinced, that nature consists of these two principles; but finding themselves perplexed by the difficulty with which they saw the Dualistic system to be encumbered, that of supposing two independent and opposite principles, they supposed both these to be comprehended in one universe, and conceived them to be united by a necessary and essential bond. To effect this, two different hypotheses were proposed: some thought God to have been eternally united to matter in one whole, which they called Chaos, whence it was sent forth, and at a certain time brought into form, by the energy of the divine inhabiting mind. This was the System of Emanation, commonly embraced by the ancient barbaric philosophers, and afterwards admitted into the early theogonies of the Greeks. Others attempted to explain the subject more philosophically, and, to avoid the absurdity which they conceived to attend both the former systems, asserted that God, the rational and efficient principle, is as intimately connected with the universe, as the human mind with the body, and is a forming power, so originally and necessarily inherent in matter, that it is to be conceived as a natural part of the original chaos. This system seems not only to have been received by the Ionic philosophers, Thales and Anaximander; but by the Pythagoreans, the followers of Heraclitus, and others. Zeno, determining to innovate upon the doctrine of the Academy, and neither choosing to adopt the Dualistic nor the Emanative System, embraced the third hypothesis, which, though not originally his own, we shall distinguish by the name of the Stoical System. Unwilling to admit, on the one hand, two opposite principles, both primary and independent, and both absolute and infinite; or on the other, to suppose matter, which is in its nature diametrically opposite to that of God, the active efficient cause, to have been derived by emanation from him; yet finding himself wholly unable to derive these two principles from any common source, he confounded their essence, and maintained that they were so essentially united, that their nature was one and the same.' *Enfield*, p. 329, 330.

wholly speculative, make known a method of abstraction, to assist ascetics in obtaining deliverance from mortal birth.

Udwāyanūndū, a śūnyasēē, and the compiler of 'the Essence of the Védantū,' says, 'Brūmhū and life are one: that which, pervading all the members of the body, gives to them life and motion, is called jēēvū, life; that which, pervading the whole universe, gives life and motion to all, is Brūmhū; therefore these two are one. Every kind of matter is without life; that which is created cannot possess life: therefore all life is the creator, or Brūmhū; God is the soul of the world. This is the substance of the Védantū philosophy.'

Not only is God thus declared to be the soul of the world, but the writer of the above work affirms, that the world itself is God—God expanding himself in an infinite variety of forms: 'All things past, present, and to come; all that is in the earth, sky, &c. of every class and description; all this is Brūmhū, who is the cause of all things, and the things themselves.' Yet this writer, in another part of this work, seems to affirm, that the universe is the *work* of God:—'The principle of life is Brūmhū; that which is animated is the work of Brūmhū^b, who directs every thing, as the charioteer directs the chariot. Brūmhū is everlasting and unchangeable; the world, which is his work, is changeable.'

This work represents Brūmhū, in his state of repose, as destitute of ideas or intelligence, and entirely separated from all intelligences. It describes this repose by comparing it to whatever may communicate the idea of undisturbed tranquillity; to the bosom of the unruffled ocean; or to the rest enjoyed in a deep sleep, in which there is an entire cessation even of the faculties of the mind.

^b Or, as some writers explain it, exists as an effect, as heat is an effect of fire.

The Védantū writers add, that at certain revolutions of time, 'Brūmhū, awaking from this repose, unites to himself his own energy, and creates the universe^c; that as soon as souls are united to matter, they become impressed, according to their destiny, with more or less of three qualities^d:—as 1st, with that which gives rise to excellencé of character;—2dly, with that which excites to anger, restlessness, worldly desire, &c.—and 3dly, that which leads to inactivity, ignorance, and such-like errors. The character is formed, and the future destiny regulated, by the preponderance of any one of these qualities. Krishnū is represented in the Shrēe-Bhagūvūtū-Gēetū as teaching Urjoonū, that, 'the man who is born with divine destiny is endued with certain qualities, [here follow a number of excellent qualities;] that those who come into life under the influence of the evil destiny, are distinguished by hypocrisy, pride, presumption, harshness of speech, and ignorance; that divine destiny is for eternal absorption into the divine nature; and that the evil destiny confineth the soul to mortal birth^e.'

The soul then, by*these writers, is considered as separated from the source of happiness when it takes mortal birth, and as remaining a miserable wanderer in various births and states, till it regain its place in the divine essence. A devotee, sighing for absorption, is described as uttering his feelings in words to this purport: 'When shall I be delivered from this world, and obtain God!'

^c 'When Brūmhū withdraws his energy, the destruction of the world succeeds; when he employs it, creation springs to birth.' *The Védantū-sarū.*

^d The possession of more or less of any one of these qualities is owing to the balance of merit or demerit in the preceding birth. Many Hindoo philosophers, however, have no idea of accountability as the cause of reward or suffering: they suppose that all actions, good and bad, produce certain natural effects, which ripen in a future birth; as poverty, disease, and wickedness, or riches, health, and works of merit.

^e See Wilkins's translation of this work.

In consonance with these ideas, a system of devotion has been formed, to enable men to emancipate themselves from the influence of material objects, and thus to prepare them for absorption. In the first place, the devotee is to acquire the right knowledge of Brūmhū, namely, that God and matter are the same; that Brūmhū is the soul of the world. 'That error^f which excites earthly desires, and impels to worldly exertions, is destroyed,' says the writer of the work already quoted, 'by the knowledge of Brūmhū.' The person possessed of these ideas of God is called 'the wise man,' *Brūmhū gnanee*; and he who is destitute of this knowledge is considered as in a state of pitiable ignorance, like an insect incrustated with matter.

Further to enable him to subdue his passions, and renounce all natural desires, he is directed to retire from the world; to counteract all his natural propensities; and to confine himself to intense meditation on Brūmhū, till he has thoroughly established in his mind this principle, that, 'seeing every thing proceeded from Brūmhū, and that, at the end of the four yoogūs, when the universe shall be dissolved, every thing will be absorbed into him again, therefore Brūmhū is every thing.'

The Védantū-sarū says, 'There are four ways by which the knowledge of Brūmhū is perfected:—1st, By that reflection, in which the person decides upon what is changeable and what is unchangeable in the world;—2dly, By cultivating a distaste of all sensual pleasures, and even of the happiness enjoyed by the gods;—3dly, By the following qualities, an unruffled mind, the subjugation of the passions, unrepenting generosity, contempt of the world, the rejection of whatever obstructs the acquisition of the knowledge of Brūmhū;—and 4thly, By unwavering faith in the shastrūs, added to the desire of absorption.'

^f Error here refers to the false idea, that a man's self and spirit are different, as that *I* is any thing different from spirit. This idea of the separate existence of *I*, leads to the idea of *mine*, and thus to every worldly desire.

Krishnū, in his conversation with Urjooaū, makes the perfection of religion to consist in subduing the passions, in perfect abstraction from all objects of the senses, and in fixing the whole mind on Brūmhū : I extract a few paragraphs from Wilkins.—‘ A man is said to be confirmed in wisdom, when he forsaketh every desire which entereth into his heart, and of himself is happy and contented in himself. His mind is undisturbed in adversity, he is happy and contented in prosperity, and he is a stranger to anxiety, fear, and anger. Such a wise man is called a sage. The wisdom of that man is established, who, in all things, is without affection, and having received good or evil, neither rejoiceth at the one, nor is cast down by the other. His wisdom is confirmed, when, like the tortoise, he can draw in all his members, and restrain them from their wonted purpose.’ ‘The wise neither grieve for the dead, nor for the living.’ ‘The wise man, to whom pain and pleasure are the same, is formed for immortality.’ ‘The heart, which followeth the dictates of the moving passions, carrieth away the reason, as the storm the bark in the raging ocean.’ ‘The man whose passions enter his heart as waters run into the unswelling placid ocean, obtaineth happiness.’ Even at the hour of death, should he attain it, he shall mix with the incorporeal nature of Brūmhū.’ ‘The man who may be self-delighted and self-satisfied, and who may be happy in his own soul, hath no interest either in that which is done, or that which is not done.’ ‘The learned behold Brūmhū alike in the reverend bramhūn perfected in knowledge, in the ox, and in the elephant; in the dog, and in him who eateth of the flesh of dogs.’ ‘Those whose minds are fixed on this equality, gain eternity even in this world. They put their trust in Brūmhū, the eternal, because he is every where alike free from fault.’ ‘The enjoyments which proceed from the feelings, are as the wombs of future pain.’ ‘To the yogēē, gold, iron, and stones, are the same.’ ‘The yogēē constantly exerciseth

‘ This is strange doctrine in the mouth of Krishnū, who spent his youth in licentious amours; and afterwards, cohabited with Radha, the wife of Ayanū-ghoshū, while he retained 1600 mistresses.

the spirit in private. He is recluse, of a subdued mind and spirit; free from hope, and free from perception. He planteth his own seat firmly on a spot that is undefiled, neither too high nor too low, and sitteth upon the sacred grass which is called *kooshū*, covered with a skin and a cloth. There he, whose business is the restraining of his passions, should sit, with his mind fixed on one object alone, in the exercise of his devotion for the purification of his soul; keeping his head, neck, and body steady without motion, his eyes fixed on the point of his nose, looking at no other place around.' 'The man whose mind is endued with this devotion, and looketh on all things alike, beholdeth the supreme soul in all things, and all things in the supreme soul.' 'He who having closed up all the doors of his faculties, locked up his mind in his own breast, and fixed his spirit in his head, standing firm in the exercise of devotion, repeateth in silence *Om!* the mystic sign of *Brūmhū*, shall, on his quitting this mortal frame, calling upon me, without doubt go the journey of supreme happiness.' 'He my servant is dear unto me, who is unexpecting, just, and pure, impartial, free from distraction of mind, and who hath forsaken every enterprize. He is worthy of my love, who neither requireth, nor findeth fault; who neither lamenteth, nor coveteth; and being my servant, hath forsaken both good and evil fortune; who is the same in friendship and in hatred, in honour and dishonour, in cold and in heat, in pain and in pleasure; who is unsolicitous about the events of things; to whom praise and blame are as one; who is of little spirit, and pleased with whatever cometh to pass; who owneth no particular honour, and who is of a steady mind.' 'Wisdom is exemption from attachments and affection for children, wife, and home; a constant evenness of temper upon the arrival of every event, whether longed for or not; a constant and invariable worship paid to me alone; worshipping in a private place; and a dislike to the society of man.'

A most singular ceremony, called *yogū*, is said to have been formerly practised by ascetics to prepare them for absorption. I

give an account of this ceremony from the first part of the *Pa-tünjülü Dürshünü*, and the *Gorükshü-sünghita* :—

The *yogēē* must in the first place, by medicines (here described) reduce the appetites of the body, and increase its strength; he must then learn the proper posture for the ceremony: this posture may be various, but a particular one is here enjoined—the *yogēē* is to put his legs across in a sitting posture, and to hold his feet with his hands crossed behind him. The next act of austerity is that of learning to inhale and discharge his breath; in doing which, he is to take a piece of cloth fifteen cubits long and four fingers in breadth, and swallow it repeatedly, drawing it up and taking it down his throat, drinking water at intervals. He must next choose a seat on some sacred spot, at the bottom of a *vütu* tree, at some place frequented by pilgrims, near an image of an uncreated *lingü*, or in any place peculiarly pleasant to a *yogēē*; but it must be a secret one.—That on which he must sit may be either *kooshü* grass, or the skin of a tyger or a deer, or a blanket; he must not sit on wood, nor on the earth, nor on cloth; his back, neck, and head must be exactly erect; and he must remain motionless, keeping his eyes fixed on his nose. The act of *yogü* consists of several parts: the devotee must first with his thumbs and fingers prevent the air from issuing through his eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth, and with his feet bind up the two other avenues of respiration. This he is to practise by degrees till he is able to exist without inspiration and respiration. He who is thus far perfected will be able to subdue his passions, and to disrelish all the pleasures of the senses. Should the mind, at any time, be again entangled in worldly attachments, the devotee must study the essential virtue of things, as, that the world is a dream; that God is the all in all; and thus bring back the mind to abstraction. He is next to meditate on his guardian deity according to the rules of the *shastrü*. After thus annihilating, as it were, the body and the world, he is then to fix in his mind that he and *Brümhü* are one, and so to settle this point as never to lose sight of it, nor return

to earthly attachments. From this state of mind arises complete pleasure; he becomes dead to food and to every other bodily want.

The yogēē who has attained this state of perfection becomes emancipated in the following manner:—while he sits confining the air within his body, and closing his eyes, by the power of wisdom all his members become dead to action; he unites the energy which is lodged in the body to the soul, and they both ascend by means of the veins and arteries to the skull, from which the soul escapes, by the *basilar suture*: and the body being thus shaken off, he is reunited to the supreme soul^m.

The Védantū-saru also pronounces in favour of an opinion of the philosopher Shūnkūrū, that the practice of ceremonies is to be renounced by the person seeking absorption, in whom all desires respecting himself are to be annihilated.

From the preceding sketch, the reader will be able to form some idea of this system of Hindoo theology, which is doubtless very ancient. No yogēēs, however, now exist, who perform these bodily austerities to the extent laid down in the shastrūs. A number of mendicants may be seen, who profess to aim at abstraction of mind, and contempt of the world; but they are in general the greatest sensualists in the country.

Amongst the learned, a few are to be found, who consider the attainment of divine wisdom, as the only means of securing future beatitude: these persons either renounce all worldly connections and become pilgrims, or they remain in a secular state, and ground their expectations (if they have any) of future happiness, on their speculative opinions being less gross than those of the vulgar. As an apology for not practising severe austerities, and for continuing in a secular state, they quote a sentence

^m For further remarks on absorption, and on those mendicants who practise austerities leading to it, the reader is referred to vol. ii. pp. 177, 178. 197—201.

of Jünükü : 'A man does not become a hermit by residing in a forest ; but he is a hermit, who even in his own house subdues his passions.' Some of these persons despise the popular superstition.

The absurdity and impiety of the opinions upon which the practices of these yogēes are founded, need not be exposed : the doctrine which destroys all accountability to the Creator, and removes all that is criminal in immorality, must be condemned by every good man ; and the absurdity of rejecting those rational enjoyments which at once prove the beneficence of the Creator, and contribute to the refinement of our nature, is so flagrant, that the slightest notice of it may surely be considered as more than necessary to the discharge of our duty to the interests of Christian morals.

The author may however remark, that he has had many opportunities of witnessing the pernicious effects of the belief, that it is God in man who is the author of every volition, and that evil and good actions are both to be referred to him. A Hindoo, perverted by these ideas, does not perceive the evil of ascribing every villainous action to God ; though when the dreadful and unavoidable result of this doctrine has been pointed out, many revolt from the conclusion. Under the influence of this doctrine, that the human soul is God, the crimes of a malefactor lose their turpitude, and he is bewailed as a person who has acted under unfortunate influence, or as one born with evil destiny. It is also easy to perceive, that where such a belief prevails, all efforts to fly from evil, and to attain moral perfection, are out of the question :—' God does every thing ;' ' My evil destiny follows me every where, as a shadow the body,' is the method by which the Hindoo accounts for all his evil propensities and unjust actions.

Another class of Hindoos place a greater reliance on DEVOTION than on divine knowledge. They derive their opinions from different parts of the Hindoo writings, and from favourite books

of their own, as the Madhyū-bhashyū, Bhūktee-rūsamritū-sindhoo, &c. One of the sentiments of this sect is thus given in the Shrēe-bhagūvūtū :—‘ He who, renouncing the service of God, enters the path of wisdom, (practises religious austerities,) works hard at bruising the straw, but obtains only chaff.’ Another of their poets has a verse to this purport :—‘ He who dies at Kashēe obtains absorption : true ; but the cause of his emancipation is his devotion.’—Vūrahū, a poet belonging to the court of Vikrūm-adityū, says, personifying a person of this sect, ‘ O God ! I ask not for the merit of works ; nor for riches ; nor for fame ; I leave all this to fate ; nor do I refuse to endure the fruit of my actions :—but this I ask, that, through every transmigration, I may be thy devoted servant.’—Vilwū-mungūlū, another poet of this sect, says, addressing himself to Vīshnoo, ‘ O God ! I desire not absorption. I ask for a distinct existence, and to be always near thee, as my lord and master.’ Some of these persons express attachment to their guardian deity in the most familiar acts of devotion—as his friends, or servants ; in songs or prayers ; by bowing or making offerings to his image, by washing its feet, by repeating his name, or listening to his praise, or meditating on his qualities. These persons are mostly found among the followers of Krishnū and Choitūnyū.

Such a worshipper presents himself before the image of Krishnū, and says, ‘ Oh, t’hakoorū ! thou art God, the maker of the world, the saviour, the friend of the friendless : I am destitute ; I am thy servant ; save me !’ Others, more fervent in their attachment, omitting the usual purifications and ablutions before morning worship, hasten, as soon as they rise, to pay all those marks of respect and attention to the image which belong to the character under which they worship it. For instance, one man’s image is that of the infant Krishnū : he imagines it necessary, that the god should be honoured as a child, and he therefore makes an offering of sweetmeats to him early in the morning ; he is very careful too that the image should be laid down to rest, and raised up again, only at the appointed hours ; he bathes, anoints it, and adorns it with the utmost fondness. Songs in

praise of Krishnū are very common amongst this sect; and sometimes an enthusiast falls to the ground while singing, and exhibits all the symptoms of superstitious frenzy. These persons reject many of the Hindoo ceremonies; but they repeat the name of Krishnū, worship the common images of this god, and observe the national festivals to his honour. Some individuals are directed in their religious duties by the Hindoo writings: but the great body are enthusiasts, following the impulse of feelings enkindled by their own impure imaginations. Some of them wander from village to village, proclaiming the name and reciting the praises of Krishnū.

Those who reverence the philosophical doctrine, and those who thus adhere to devotion, form however but a very small part of the Hindoo population. The great majority of the community are attached to the popular ceremonies, considering them as at least *leading to* the knowledge of God, or as laying in a stock of merit which will influence their condition in this or a future birth.

The other branch of Hindoo theology enjoins RELIGIOUS DUTIES, as preparing a person for that state which leads to absorption. Krishnū, in his address to Urjoonū, thus holds up the value of religious practice:—‘Perform thy duty, and make the event equal whether it terminate in good or evil. The miserable are so on account of the event of things. Wise men, who have abandoned all thought of the fruit of their actions, are freed from the chains of birth, and go to the regions of eternal happiness¹. Jūnūkū and others have attained perfection even by

¹ Mr. Wilkins has thus translated this part of the Bhagvūtū; but the fact is, that there is no *distinct* happiness in the Hindoo absorption, because there is no remaining individuality. The spirit being liberated from every thing which is not spirit, and absorbed in the ocean of universal spirit, or deity, there can be no such thing as individual enjoyment. The Hindoos illustrate their idea on this subject, by comparing the soul to air confined in a vessel, which, when the vessel breaks, is immediately lost in the vast body of air which composes the atmosphere.

works. Wise men call him a pūndit, whose every undertaking is free from the idea of desire. He abandoneth a desire of a reward of his actions; he is always contented and independent, and although he may be engaged in a work, he as it were doth nothing. God is to be obtained by him who maketh God alone the object of his works. The speculative and the practical doctrines are but one, for both obtain the self-same end, and the place which is gained by the followers of the one is gained by the followers of the other. The man who, performing the duties of life, and quitting all interest in them, placeth them upon Brūmhū the supreme, is not tainted by sin; but remaineth, like the leaf of the lotus, unaffected by the waters.—If thou shouldest be unable, at once, steadfastly to fix thy mind on me, endeavour to find me by means of constant practice. If after practice thou art still unable, follow me in my works supreme, for by performing works for me thou shalt obtain perfection.

This brings us to the popular superstition of the Hindoos, of which I shall now endeavour to give a summary account, beginning with their mythology.

It is very difficult, perhaps, to speak decisively on the precise origin of any of the *Ancient Systems of Idolatry*; but not so difficult to trace idolatry itself to certain natural causes, and to prove, that the heathen deities owe their origin to the common darkness and depravity of men; who, rejecting the doctrine of the divine unity, and considering God as too great or too spiritual to be the object of human worship, chose such images as their darkness or their passions suggested. Hence idolatry has arisen out of circumstances common to all heathen nations; which fact, and another hereafter mentioned, will account for many coincidences in the mythology of nations the most remote, while differences in manners and customs, and in the degrees of civilization, may account for most of the diversities found in the images and worship of different idolatrous nations.

It is not to be supposed that any of the images invented by the

heathen were intended to be representations of the One God, according to the ideas given of this adorable Being in the sacred Scriptures; they are images of beings formed by the fancies of men, who 'by wisdom knew not God.' It is probable, indeed, that no heathen nation ever made a single idol in honour of 'the one living and true God;' and that direct worship to Him was never offered by any heathens.

Nor does it appear, from the various systems of idolatry, that the heathen regarded the gods as intercessors with the Supreme Being. It is certain that no such idea exists among the Hindoos, who never worship the One God, either directly or through the intercessions of others. The gods are regarded as the only divine beings from whom evil is to be dreaded, or good to be expected. It is true, I have heard the bramhūns often speak of the worship of the gods as introducing the worshipper to a greater approximation to final beatitude, but this has nothing to do with the Christian doctrine of mediation.

Writers on heathen mythology have frequently supposed, that the extraordinary bodily organs of the gods were intended to represent the *perfections of Deity*. Such writers, in elucidating the Hindoo system, would have said, 'Indrū is represented as full of eyes^k, to exhibit the divine omniscience; Brūmha with four faces, to display the perfect wisdom of God; and Doorga with ten hands, to teach that God is almighty.' It is a fact, however, that the Hindoos are never thus instructed by the forms of their idols. When the author once interrogated a learned bramhūn on this subject, he rejected this Christian explanation of the forms of his idols, and referred him to the image of Ravūnū, the cannibal, who is painted with a hundred arms, and ten heads^l.

^k The Hindoo fable on this subject is so insufferably gross, that it cannot be printed.

^l Thus Briareus, one of the monsters brought forth by the earth, is said to have had a hundred arms, with which he threw up to heaven the rocks from the sea shore against Jupiter.

It has been common too to represent the idols as personifications of the *virtues*, and as teaching, by hieroglyphics, a theory of morals. As it respects the Hindoos, however, the fact is, that they have still, for popular use, a system of morals to seek: some of their idols are actually personifications of *vice*; and the formularies used before the images, so far from conveying any moral sentiment, have the greatest possible tendency to corrupt the mind with the love of riches and pleasure^m.

To the author it seems equally improbable, that the original framers of idols designed to teach by them a system of *natural science*. The distance of time betwixt the formation of different images, militates strongly against such an idea: men of science, also, have generally held idolatrous rites in contempt; but before a man would sit down to frame an image, to teach the sciences, his mind must have been enthusiastically attached to idolatry. Nor does it appear probable, that the Hindoo poets were the first who set up idol worship; though we admit, that many ideas on this subject were borrowed from their extravagant descriptions, and ethereal visions. The introduction of new idols seems, in most instances, to have been the work of kings, who sought the *gratification* of the populace, rather than their instruction; and the exhibition of popular sentiments, rather than the teaching of profound mysteries, or the principles of science. It appears from the Brümhū-voivürttū pooranū, that king Soorūt'hū first set up the image of Doorga; king Mūngūlū, that of Lūkshmēē; Ushwū-pūtee, that of Savitrēē, the wife of Brümha; king Sooyūgnū, that of Radha, the mistress of Krishnū; Rūmyū-rūt'hū, king of Oojjūnyinēē, that of Kartikéyū; king Shivū, that of Sōōryū; and the sage Boudhayūnū, that of Gūnéshū.

The author imagines, that the disclosure of real facts respecting the Mythology of the Hindoos, would greatly tend to eluci-

^m See Mr. Colebrooke's translation of many of these formularies, in his excellent Essays on the Religious Ceremonies of the Hindoos, in the viith and viiith volumes of the Asiatic Researches.

date the origin of that of ALL THE EASTERN NATIONS; and he here offers to the consideration of his readers a conjecture or two, the fruit of his own enquiries. The philosophers of all these nations conceived, that the Great Spirit remains for ever unknown, that he neither comes within the thoughts nor the speech of men. In the Chandogyū oopūnishūd of the Rig védū, we have a discourse on this subject, in which Shwétū-kétoo enquired of Boudhayūnū respecting Brūmhū: the sage answered him by an impressive silence: on being called upon for the reason of this silence, he answered, '*Brūmhū is undescrivable*: he who says, "I know, Brūmhū," knows him not; he who says, "I know him not," has obtained this knowledge.' The védū declares, that 'he is that which has never been seen nor known.' In other words, he is the Athenian 'unknown God.' The One God is never worshipped by the Hindoos as a mere spiritual being, but always as united to matter, and before some image.

When Brūmhū resolved to create, according to the pooranūsⁿ, he looked upon^o that which is denominated by the Hindoo philosophers delusion, or inanimate energy^p, and became subject to the three qualities (goonūs) of which it is composed—that which leads to truth, and is called sūttū; that which excites desires, (rūjū;) and that which leads to sensuality, (tūmū.) He now created time, nature, and future consequences; the primary elements; the organs of sense, of action, and of intellect: he

ⁿ The Shrēe-Bhagūvūtū, &c. The Noiyayikūs declare, that the universe was created from atoms; while the Mēemangsūkūs, equally wise, affirm, that the consequences of actions were the only things united to birth.

^o 'Or,' as the word is explained by some Hindoo scholars, 'the first inclination of the Godhead to diversify *himself*, by creating worlds.' Sir W. Jones.

^p It is called delusion, or appearance, to shew, that it is something assumed for an occasion, and which, when that occasion is served, will be destroyed: hence they say, that matter is from everlasting, but is subject to destruction. It is called inanimate energy, as it supplies the forms of things, though the vivifying principle is God.

next became the first form, or pattern, or the aggregate, of life, and individuated himself into separate portions of animal life; and then, under the name of Vishnool, he created the universe from the waters, and entered it as the soul of the world.

While Vishnool lay asleep on the waters, a lotus ascended from his navel, from which sprung Brümha, the creator. Shivü, Vishnool, and Brümha, are considered as the representations of the three goonüs: Vishnool of the süttü goonü, Brümha of the rüjü, and Shivü of the tümü. We have no regular account of the creation of Vishnool and Shivü. Almost all the other Hindoo deities are found to be derived from the three principal gods:—Indrü, Kamü-dévü, Doorga, Söörü, Ugnee, Püvünü, Vüroonü, Güroorü, Vishvü-kürma, Sürüswütēē, Yümü, &c. are the descendants of *Brümha*;—Güneshü, Jügünnat'hü, Bülüramü, Ramü, Krishnü, Gopalü, Gopēē-nat'hü, Valü-Gopalü, Choitünyü, Sütyü-Narayünü, Lükshmēē, &c. are forms of *Vishnool*;—Kartikēyü, Pünchanünü, Roodrü, Kalü-Bhoirüvü, &c. are forms of *Shivü*. ‘Thus,’ as Sir W. Jones has observed, ‘we must not be surprised at finding, on a close examination, that the characters of all the Pagan deities, male and female, melt into each other, and at last into one or two.’

But the enquiry returns, ‘What is the object of worship among the Hindoos?’ It is not the ONE GOD, but this compound being, the soul of the world inclosed in matter, the primeval energy, the prolific and vivifying principle dwelling in all animated existences^a, or in other words the personification of

^a When the following lines of Pope were read to Gopalü-türkalünkarü, a learned bramhün, he started from his seat, begged for a copy of them, and declared that the author must have been a Hindool:—

‘All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;—
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.’

whatever the disordered imaginations of the Hindoos have attributed to this God encompassing himself with delusion^r. This energy is said to have created the universe; and therefore this, as displayed in the grandest of the forms it assumes^s, is the object of worship. Hence the gods, the heavens collectively, the sun and moon, as well as, ~~the stars~~, the sea, mighty rivers, and extraordinary appearances in nature, receive the adorations of the Hindoos^t. This energy itself has been personified and worshipped, not only in the form of Bhūgūvūtē^u, but, as it is manifested equally in creation, in the government of the world, and in the work of destruction, in Brūmha, Vishnoo, and Shivū. The universe being full of the divine majesty, a deity has been consecrated as the regent of every element; and, to complete this mass of folly, the bramhūn^v and the devout mendicant, as

^r The Tūntrūś teach, that after Brūmhū had entered the world, he divided himself into male and female.

^s 'It seems a well-founded opinion, that the whole crowd of gods and goddesses in ancient Rome, and modern Vánáres, mean only the powers of nature, and principally those of the Sun, expressed in a variety of ways, and by a multitude of fanciful names.' *Sir W. Jones*.—'Nature herself, and its plastic powers, originating solely in the sovereign energies of the supreme creative source of all being, they (the Asiatics) absurdly dignified by the majestic denomination of God. This supreme creative energy, diffused through nature, they distinguished by various names: sometimes it was Osiris, the fountain of LIGHT, the SUN, the prolific principle by which that was invigorated; sometimes it was the life-generating FIRE, the divine offspring of the solar deity; and it was sometimes called by an appellation consonant to the SOUL OF THE WORLD. THE FIRST VIVIFIC PRINCIPLE, emanating from the primeval source of being, is visibly of Chaldaic origin; and thence, through the medium of the Egyptians, the Stoic philosophers doubtless had their doctrine of 'the fiery soul of the world,' by which they supposed all things to be created, animated, and governed.' *Maurice*.

^t 'They (the pagans) called the elementary fire Pitha, Vulcan, Ugree; the solar light they denominated Osiris, Mithra, Sooryū, Apollo; and the pervading air, or spirit, Cneph, Narayūnū, Zeus, or Jupiter.' *Maurice*.

^u Many Hindoos are denominated shaktūś, as devoted to the worship of this shūktee, or energy. It is remarkable, also, that all the goddesses are called the energies of their lords, as well as matrees, or mothers.

sharing more largely of the indwelling deity, have received the adoration of the multitude.

If we recur to the bodily powers of the different images worshipped by the Hindoos, we see the same principle exhibited: hence Unüntü has a thousand heads; Brümha has four faces; Indrū is full of eyes; Doorga has ten, and even Ravünū, the giant, has an hundred arms:—the formidable weapons^x of the gods too, have evidently the same allusion, as well as their symbols and vehicles, among which we find the eagle^y, the serpent, the lion, the tiger, the elephant, the bull, the buffalo, &c. The abominable lingū worship too, (the last state of degradation to which human nature can be driven,) no doubt took its rise from the same doctrine.

Under the influence of this doctrine, the philosophic mind chose, as the objects of its adoration, the forms in which this energy displays itself with the greatest magnificence, and almost confined its worship to the primary elements, the heavenly bodies, and ærial beings;—the great body of the community became attached to this energy in its forms of preservation;—persons of gloomy habits, as ascetics and yogēes, adored it in the work of destruction, as connected with emancipation and with return to ineffable repose in the divine essence. The first class chose the retirement of forests as the scene of their contemplations; the second, the public streets, to adore the prolific power; and the last retired to gloomy caverns^z, for the celebration of

^x Indrū's thunder-bolt; the Brümhastrū, a weapon wielded by the gods, which infallibly destroys an enemy. 'Vishnoo's chūkra, a weapon in the form of a circle, continually vomiting flames.' *Maurice*.

^y 'Vishnoo riding upon his Gūroortū, or eagle,' says Maurice, 'puts us in mind of the thunder-bearing eagle of the Grecian Jupiter.'

^z The Scythians, the Druids, and other ancient nations, it is well known, worshipped this energy in its destructive forms in gloomy recesses, and there offered human and other victims. In the caverns of Salsette and Elephanta, too, the same horrid rites were practised by gloomy ascetics.

those horrid rites, which took their rise in the common error, that the energetic principle is the chief object of worship.

Thus the indwelling principle is adored in whatever form it is supposed to display itself: in the cow, as a form of Bhūgūvūtē; in the boar, as an incarnation of Vishnū; and in an ascetic, who has passed through religious austerities supposed to be too dreadful to be borne without support from the divine inhabiting energy. Exactly conformable to the Hindoo idea was the declaration respecting Simon Magus, 'This man is the great power of God.'

The object of adoration being thus simple power, or energy, wherever this is supposed to reside, the impiety of the possessor forms no obstacle to his becoming an object of worship: it is sufficient that he be a god or a brāhmā. 'The learned,' says Krishnū, 'behold Brūmhū alike in the reverend brāhmā, perfected in knowledge, in the ox and the elephant; in the dog, and in him who eateth of the flesh of dogs.' Upon the same principle the Hindoo, when he sees the force with which the flood-tide comes into the Ganges, or any other similar phenomena of nature, recognizes it as God, or the energy of God. The blessing which he supposes a yogē obtains, as the fruit of his religious austerities, he confines to power—power to heal or to kill others, to ride in the air on the back of a tiger, to foretell future events, &c. Benevolent dispositions and actions procure for a man praise, but not reverence. *Howard* would have obtained the encomiums of this people, and would have been complimented on the exaltation he was likely to have in the next birth, but nobody would have worshipped him; this honour is always reserved for men of pretended supernatural powers.

If these conjectures be just, they may perhaps afford a solution of the difficulties attending the worship of the Egyptians^a, the

^a 'Taut, or Thoth, was the true Anubis of the Egyptians, one of their eight greater gods. Thoth considers the cosmogony of Phœnicia as

Scythians, the Greeks, the Persians, and other idolaters; some of them adoring, by sanguinary rites, this principle in its destructive forms, and others in its prolific forms, fire, and the solar orb^b. It is the same energetic principle that is also worshipped in the wonderful motions of the heavenly bodies, and in the conflicting gods and the giants, shaking to its centre the solid world; in the warring elements^c; and even in all the forms of brute matter in which it appears.

These ideas the author offers to the examination of men of greater leisure and erudition, not without the hope, that they may tend to elucidate a subject exceedingly complicated; and upon which a great variety of opinions have been held. As the same ideas respecting the divine energy were held in common by almost all the ancient philosophers, it is not wonderful that the same objects of worship should be seen among all nations, subject to those variations and additions which might be expected when man had abandoned the doctrine of the divine unity, and had resolved to worship every form and appearance of this energy.

The Hindoo mythology, in its present mixed state, presents us with gods of every possible shape, and for every possible pur-

founded on the doctrine which maintains two principles in nature, matter or darkness, and spirit or intelligence. By the former, he would understand the chaos, obscure and turbid; by the latter, the agitative wind or spirit, which put that chaos in motion, and ranged in order the various parts of the universe.' *Maurice*.

^b In this island of Albion, the image of the sun was placed upon an high pillar, as half a man, with a face full of rays of light, and a flaming wheel on his breast. He was worshipped in the same manner as Mithra in Persia, and the divinities of the East. The Persian Magi preserved a continual fire upon an altar in honour of the sun and the lights in the firmament, as the Romans did their holy fire dedicated to Vesta. The Jewish writers affirm, that this was the god Abraham refused to worship in Ur of the Chaldees.' *Galtruchius*.—'The sun became the deity adored by the Sabian idolaters.' *Maurice*.

^c 'Sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind.'

pose, (*even to cure the itch!*) but most of them appear to refer to the doctrine of the periodical creation and destruction of the world^d,—the appearances of nature^e,—the heavenly bodies^f,—the history of deified heroes^g,—the poetical wars of the giants with the gods^h,—or to the real or imagined wants of mankindⁱ.

It cannot be doubted, from what has been published of the védüs, said to be the most ancient of the Hindoo writings, that the PRIMARY ELEMENTS, fire, air, water, earth, and space, with the HEAVENLY BODIES, and AERIAL BEINGS, were the first objects of worship among this people.

The worship of the *primary elements* possibly originated in the doctrine of the védüs respecting the eternity of matter; for we find in these writings the elements deified, and called by appropriate names, as in the modern mythology of the Hindoos.

The worship of the *heavenly bodies* may probably be attributed to the astronomical notions of the Hindoos: and, as the worship of heathens has always been dictated by their fears and hopes rather than by their reason, it is not a matter of surprise that they should have worshipped the host of heaven, while they believed the stars to have such a mighty and immediate influence on their destiny here and hereafter. In the prayers of the védüs, the name of Indrū is found, who was probably considered as a

^d As Brümha and Shivü.

^e The deified elements, as Püvünü, Vüroonü, &c.

^f Söoryü, Chündrü, &c.

^g Ramü, who, in reference to his forest residence, is painted green, and carries a bow and arrows.

^h Doorga, who has a giant at her feet, and the head of another in her hand. The author will not presume to decide, whether these wars of the gods have reference to human contests, and as such are to be regarded as real history disguised in fable; or whether images of this class have been borrowed merely from the reveries of the poets.

ⁱ Sürüsütēē, the goddess of learning; Unü-pöörnü, the goddess of plenty, &c.

personification of the heavens: his name, *Indrū*, signifies the glorious; and his body, covered with stars, might easily be supposed to resemble 'the spangled heavens.'

The worship of *aërial beings*, under the general name of spirits, is easily accounted for from the proneness of mankind to superstitious fears respecting invisible existences, and from the notion found in the Hindoo writings, that every form of animated existence has its tutelar divinity presiding over it^k.

These appear to have been the first gods worshipped in India, though such a system of mythology could in no way account for the existence and government of the universe; which exhibited a process for which this system made no provision. This might therefore induce later Hindoo theologians to add three new gods, under the characters of the CREATOR, the PRESERVER, and the DESTROYER,—*Brümha*, *Vishnoo*, and *Shivü*; and the *pooranüs* exhibit each of these gods at his post, committing faults and absurdities that would disgrace beings destitute of every spark of divinity, and even of reason.

A philosophical doctrine found in the *Tüntrüs*, having reference to the supposed union of spirit and matter in the formation of the world^l, has introduced an order of FEMALE deities among this people, at the head of which stands *Bhügüvütēē*, or *Doorga*. Of this goddess, many forms are worshipped among the Hindoos; and indeed almost all the goddesses are only different forms of *Bhügüvütēē*, as the image of *Prükritee*, or nature.

Jügünnat'hü, the lord of the world; *Koovérü*, the god of

^k Diseases also, and divisions of time, as well as places, have their tutelar deities. The god *Bhügü*, who is blind of both eyes, presides over the members of the body.

^l Mr. Paterson thinks, that the mixed image of *Hürü-Gourēē*, in which *Shivü* and *Doorga* are united in one image, is intended to represent this union.

riches; Kamū-dévū, the god of love; Kartikéyū, the god of war; Yūmū, the regent of death; and Vishwū-kūrmū, the architect of the gods; seem to have originated in the fables of the Hindoos, and in the imagined necessities of a people destitute of just ideas respecting Divine Providence.

Krishnū, Ramū, and other terrestrial gods, are evidently deified HEROES.

These general remarks may probably account for the whole system of Hindoo idolatry, without the absolute necessity of admitting that this people borrowed their gods from their neighbours. That they borrowed some, or the features of some, many striking coincidences hereafter mentioned seem to indicate; but, these coincidences excepted, we have found no further evidence of this fact^m.

I shall now give some account of the gods found in the HINDOO PANTHEONⁿ, as a very brief notice of what the reader has to expect in this volume.

It may be necessary, however, to premise, that the Hindoos profess to have 330,000,000 of gods: not that they have even the names of such a number; but they say, that God performs all his works by the instrumentality of the gods, and that all human actions, as well as all the elements, have their tutelar deities.

Images have been chosen to fix the mind of the worshipper,

^m Should the reader, however, be inclined to pursue this subject, he will find much ingenious conjecture, and many apparent resemblances betwixt the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman mythology and that of the Hindoos, in Mr. Paterson's essay already alluded to.

ⁿ The Hindoos have no temple like the Pantheon at Rome; but the palaces of some Hindoo rajas contains courts filled with idols, each of which has an establishment of priests, who daily perform the ceremonies of worship.

and attributes of power and splendour, and various fables, having been added in the forms of devotion and the addresses to the gods, all these attributes are recognized, and the contents of these fables rehearsed, to raise in the mind of the worshipper the highest thoughts of the power of the idol.

He who approaches an idol, seeking the happiness of a future state, is required to fix in his mind only one idea, that the god can save him: and in this respect all the gods, however various their images, are equal. But when a Hindoo is anxious to obtain any peculiar favour, he applies to the god whose province it is to bestow it: thus, he who prays to Brümha, entreats that he may be like him, in order to absorption; but he who is anxious that his members may continue perfect, and that he may enjoy the pleasures of the senses, worships Indrū; he who desires children, prays to the progenitors of mankind; he who seeks worldly prosperity, worships Lūkshmēē; he who prays for a shining body, supplicates Ugnee; the person who is anxious for strength, applies to Roodrū; the glutton prays to Uditee; he who pants for a crown, applies to Vishwū-dévū or Swayūmbhoovū; a king intreats Sādhvū, that his kingdom may be free from sedition; he who prays for long life, addresses himself to Ushwinēē-koomarū; he who desires corpulence, addresses Prit'hivēē; he who prays that he may preserve his homestead, petitions Prit'hivēē and the regents of space; he who seeks beauty, prays to the Gündhūrvūs; he who prays for a good wife, calls on Oorvūsēē, a celestial courtesan; he who seeks honour, prays to Yūgnū; he who is anxious for store-houses full of wealth, calls on Prūchéta; the seeker of wisdom, solicits the favour of Shivū; he or she who seeks union and happiness in the marriage state, addresses Doorga; he who wishes to destroy his enemy, supplicates Noiritū; he who is anxious for strength of body, prays to Vayoo; he who prays to be preserved from obstruction in his affairs, calls on Koovérū; he who prays for the merit of works, applies to the regent of verse; he who prays for pleasure in the enjoyment of earthly things, addresses Chündrū; he who desires freedom from worldly pas-

sions, he who asks for the completion of all his desires, he who prays for absorption, and the person free from all desire, worship Brümha. Hence it appears, that all the Hindoo gods, except Brümha, are considered as bestowing only temporal favours; and it has been already observed, that this god has been abandoned, and left without either temples or images. Thus the whole system excites in the mind of the worshipper only cupidity and the love of pleasure; and to this agrees what I have repeatedly heard from sensible bramhüns, that few if any persons now attend the public festivals with a direct view to a future state.

It is common for the Hindoos to speak of some of their gods as benevolent, and to treat others as malignant beings*: Shivü, as well as other gods, unites both these qualities; in one hand he holds a dreadful weapon, and with two others he blesses a worshipper, and invites him to approach. Not one of these images, however, conveys the least idea of the moral attributes of God.

1. *Brümha*. This god may be properly noticed first, as he is called the *creator*, and the grandfather of gods and men; in the latter designation he resembles Jupiter, as well as in the lasciviousness of his conduct, having betrayed a criminal passion towards his own daughter. Brümha's image is never worshipped, nor even made; but the Chündēē describes it as that of a red man with four faces^p. He is red, as a mark of his being full of the rūjū goonü; he has four faces, to remind the worshipper that the védüs proceeded from his four mouths. In one hand he has a string of beads, to shew that his power as creator was

* Hindoo women, and the lower orders, regard Pūnchanünü, Dükshinü-rayü, Münüsa, Sheëtüla, Shüsht'hēē, as malignant demons, and worship them through fear, still praying to them for protection. The superior deities, though arrayed with attributes of terror, are considered as using their power only in favour of the worshipper.

^p Brümha had five heads, but Shivü deprived him of one, as a punishment for his lust.

derived from his devotion. The pan of water in his left hand points out, that all things sprang from water. It has excited much surprise, that this deity, so pre-eminent, should be entirely destitute of a temple and of worshippers. Mr. Paterson supposes, that, in some remote age, the worshippers of Shivü carried on a contest with the followers of Brümha, and wholly suppressed the worship of this god. This conjecture opens a wide field of enquiry; but this gentleman does not adduce any historical evidence of the fact. The story of Shivü's cutting off one of the heads of Brümha, and the existence of violent contentions betwixt different sects of Hindoos at the present day, can scarcely be considered as establishing it, though the conjecture appears not altogether improbable. These contentions for superiority are annually renewed at Hüree-dwarü, Uyodhya, &c. betwixt the Voishnүvüs (Ramatüs) and the followers of Shivü, in which quarrels many perish¹.

2. *Vishnoo*. This is the image of a black man, with four arms, sitting on Güroorü, a creature half-bird, half-man, and holding in his hands the sacred shell, the chükrü, the lotus, and a club. His colour (black) is that of the destroyer, which is intended to show, that Shivü and he are one; he has four hands, as the representative of the male and female powers; the shell (blown on days of rejoicing) implies that Vishnoo is a friendly deity; the chükrü is to teach that he is wise to protect; the lotus is to remind the worshipper of the nature of final emancipation, that, as this flower is raised from the muddy soil, and after rising by degrees from immersion in the waters, expands itself above the surface to the admiration of all, so man is emancipated from the chains of human birth; the club shews that he chastises the wicked.

¹ Raja-Ramü, a learned shikh, employed as a translator in the Serampore printing-office, says, that about forty years ago, not less than 10,000 persons, and, about twenty years ago, 4 or 5,000 perished in these contests at Hüree-dwarü. Another proof, added to that respecting the Bouddhus, that the Hindoo is not free from the fiercest spirit of persecution.

Gūroorū is a portion of Shivū ; his body represents the védū. Vishnool is distinguished as being the source of most of the Hindool incarnations ; in which forms he commands the worship of the greatest division of the Hindool population. I know of no temples nor festivals in honour of Vishnool. He is called the *Preserver*, but the actions ascribed to him under this character are referred to other forms and names. The shalgramū, a stone, is a form of Vishnool. During four months of the year, all the forms of this god are laid to sleep. From the agreement of this fact with what is said of Horus, Mr. Paterson gathers a resemblance betwixt Vishnool and Horus, and supposes that the Hindoos derived their system from the Egyptian : he conjectures, also, that the fable of Vishnool's lying down to sleep, turning to one side, and rising, refer to the increase, the greatest rise, and the retiring of the waters of the Ganges, the Indian Nile. The state of the river in these four months agrees with this supposition, though the bramhūns I consulted were not aware that this ceremony had any connection with the Ganges. Vishnool is sometimes called the household god.

3. Shivū is a white man with five faces and four arms, riding on a bull. In one hand he holds an axe, as the destroyer of the wicked ; in another a deer, alluding to a sacrifice, when the deer, fleeing from the sacrificial knife, took refuge with Shivū ; with another hand he is bestowing a blessing, and with the last forbidding fear. Four of his faces are designed to point out the sixty-four tūntrūs, and the other a different tūntrū. The bull is a form of Vishnool, as the personification of religion ; its four feet are, religious austerities, purity, compassion, and truth. In some particulars, this god strongly reminds us of Vulcan and Bacchus. The few Hindoos in Bengal who adopt Shivū as their guardian deity, are called soivyūs. Except those of the lingū and Pūnchanūnū, very few temples exist in honour of any other form of Shivū : and none of his form riding on a bull. Before the lingū, Shivū is however daily worshipped under eight separate names, answering to the sun, moon, wind, fire, water, earth, air, and an officiating priest at a sacrifice. Mr. Paterson thinks,

that there were once fierce contentions amongst the four principal sects, and that as the soivvūs first prevailed against the worshippers of Brūmha, so, in its turn, this sect was subdued by the followers of Vishnōo and of the female deities. The filthy appearance of Shivū as a mendicant covered with ashes, and his quarrels with Doorga, his wife, have given rise to several ludicrous stories found in the pooranās. This marriage excited the same surprise as that betwixt Venus and Vulcan, and seems an unaccountable event, unless it was intended to illustrate the gross idea of the Tūntrū writers respecting the origin of the universe. Shivū has three eyes like Jupiter, wears a tiger's skin like Bacchus, and like him wandered about when on earth as a bloated mendicant, accompanied by satyrs. Bacchus wore a deer's skin; and Shivū is represented as holding a deer in his hand. The worship of the lingū, also, strongly resembles the worship of the phallus in honour of Bacchus.* The sūnyasēē festival in honour of Shivū (see vol. i. p. 19.) appears to resemble much the orgies of Bacchus, especially in the behaviour of the devotees†, who are said to have run up and down the streets with their hair disheveled, and with lighted torches in their hands. In the months Voishakhū and Kārtikū, the lingū is worshipped daily in the numerous temples dedicated to this abomination throughout Bengal. It is difficult to restrain one's indignation at the shocking violation of every thing decent in this image; nor can it be ground of wonder, that a chaste woman, faithful to her husband, is scarcely to be found among all the millions of Hindoos, when their very temples are polluted with filthy images, and their acts of worship tend to inflame the mind with licentious ideas‡. Another form of Shivū is that of

* A most singular coincidence appears to exist here betwixt the Hindoo and the Roman ceremonies.—These sūnyasēēs, though taken from the lowest order, wear the poita as brāhmīns during this festival. Kennett, in his *Roman Antiquities*, book v. p. 305, says, respecting the shews after a funeral, 'Though the exhibitors of these shews were private persons, yet during the time of the celebration, they were considered as of the highest rank and quality, having the honour to wear the Prætecta.'

† I am credibly informed, that a Hindoo, once on a visit at a temple

Kalū-Bhoirūvū, in which form he cut off Brūmha's head, which is seen in one of his hands. A sect of mendicants, called *yogū-bhogū-vadēēs*, who wear a large stone inserted through an incision in each ear, live at the temples of this god, and are sometimes seen, with a prostitute in one hand, and a pan of hot coals in the other, with each of which (the representatives of pleasure and pain) they profess to be equally pleased. Another form of this god is that of *Mūha-kalū*, in which he appears as the *destroyer*. 'Mūha-kalū, as represented in the caverns of Elephanta,' says Mr. Paterson, 'has eight arms; in one hand he holds a human figure; in another, a sword or sacrificial axe; in a third, a basin of blood; and with a fourth he rings over it the sacrificial bell: two other arms are broken off, but with the two remaining he is drawing behind him a veil, which extinguishes the sun, and involves the whole universe in one undistinguished ruin. In the hieroglyphic of the *Mūha Prūlūyū*, (or grand consummation of all things,) *Shivū* is represented as trodden under foot by *Mūha Kalēē*¹, or Eternity. He is there deprived of his crescent, trident, and necklaces, to show that his dominion and powers are no more; and is blowing the tremendous horn, which announces the annihilation of all created things.'

4. *Indrū*. This is the king of heaven, and the infamous violator of the wife of his religious guide: he is painted as a yellow man, sitting on an elephant, with a thunder-bolt in one hand, and a club in the other; and, like Argus, is full of eyes. All the attributes of his image are only the signs of his office as a king. He has one annual festival, and is very famous in the

near Serampore, asked the officiating *bramhūn* to give him a proof that the idol was able to converse with him. The *bramhūn* entered the temple, shutting the door after him, and the visitor, astonished at immediately hearing voices, interrogated the priest respecting it, who solemnly affirmed from within, that it was *Jūgūnnat'hū* who was speaking;—but the visitor, determined to ascertain so interesting a fact, forced open the temple door, and—whom should he see, inquisitive reader, but the mistress of the officiating *bramhūn*?

¹ This is the famous image worshipped at *Kalēē-Ghatū*, near Calcutta.

pooranūs for the number of wars, and intrigues in which he has been engaged. His throne changes masters at the end of seventy-one yoogūs of the gods. Jupiter was called the king of heaven, and the Fulminator: Indrū's names, Divūs-pūtee and Vūjrēē, are significant of similar offices.

5. *Yīmū*, the Indian Pluto, is a dark-green man, clothed in red, with inflamed eyes; he sits on a buffalo, has a crown on his head, and holds in his right hand a club with which he drives out the soul from the body, and punishes the wicked. This is his form of terror, as king of the souls of the dead; but he is also worshipped in a form less terrific, which he is said to assume when he passes a sentence of happiness on the meritorious. Beside his annual festival, he is worshipped on other occasions; and receives the homage of the Hindoos in their daily ablutions. There are several remarkable coincidences between *Yūmū* and Pluto, as will be seen by comparing the fables respecting the latter and those in vol. i. page 75. of this work: the images of both 'Grin horribly a ghastly smile.' Pluto had a rod in his hand; *Yūmū* is called *Dūndū-dhūrū*, because he holds in his hand the rod of punishment. *Yūmū* is the *shraddhū dévū*, or the regent of funeral rites; and the institution of funeral obsequies is ascribed to Pluto. The dead, in going to *Yūmū*'s judgment-hall, cross *Voitūrūnēē*, the Indian styx^a; the waters of which, like those of *Phlegethon*, the fourth river of hell which the dead were obliged to cross, are said to be boiling hot. *Yūmū* has several assistants, like *Minos*, who keep a register of human actions. There is something in the story inserted in vol. i. page 83, which seems to coincide with Pluto's being obliged to steal his wife *Proserpine*, because he could obtain no other goddess, his visage being so horrible and his habitation so gloomy. The Hindoos consider hell as situated at the southern extremity of the earth; the Greeks and Romans thought it was a large subterraneous spot in the earth.

^a This river encircled the infernal regions nine times: *Voitūrūnēē* encircles this hall six times.

6. *Gūneshū*. A fat short red man, with four arms and an elephant's head, sitting on a rat. His corpulency is a type of Brūmha, as the aggregate of all things. In one hand he holds a bell, which is the pattern of a temple, and also points out that this god banishes fear; in another he holds a serpent-weapon, to show that he throws impediments in the way of the wicked; another grasps the hook by which elephants are guided, which points out that he guides the mind; and with the other he forbids fear. His elephant's head is a sign of the mystical sound *Om*, and the trunk is the type of the instrument with which clarified butter is poured on the fire at a sacrifice. The author of the Roodrūyamūlū, from whom this is extracted, assigns no reason for Gūneshū's riding on a rat. Though he has been compared to Janus, I find but two instances of coincidence betwixt them: every act of worship (*pōōja*) is preceded by an invocation to Gūneshū^{*}; and men in business paint his image over the doors of their shops, or suspend it amongst their merchandize, to insure prosperity. Gūneshū has been complimented as the god of wisdom; but the Hindoo deity presiding over knowledge, or wisdom, is Sūrūswītēē, a goddess. Gūneshū receives many honours from the Hindoos, and is considered as bountiful in bestowing wisdom and other favours, though there are no temples erected to his honour in Bengal. Those who adopt him as their guardian deity, are called Ganūpūtyūs.

7. *Kartikēyū* is the Indian Mars, or commander in chief to the gods. He has in some images one, and in others six faces; is of a yellow colour; and rides on the peacock, an incarnation of Indrū. In one hand he holds a bow, and in the other an arrow. He is worshipped as the giver of bodily strength.

8. *Sōōryū*, (the sun.) I do not find the least resemblance betwixt this Hindoo deity and Sol, either in their images or history. The Hindoos, in a most indelicate fable respecting this god, have described the twelve signs of the zodiac. Yūmū, the

^{*} 'In the Roman sacrifices, the priest always mentioned first the name of Janus.' Kennett, p. 85.

regent of death, is his son; and Chaya, a shadow, the name of one of his wives⁷. The image of Sōōryū is that of a dark-red man, from whose body issue a thousand streams of light: he has three eyes, and four arms; in each of two of his hands he holds a water-lily, with another he is bestowing a blessing, and with the last forbidding fear. He sits on a red lotus, in a chariot drawn by seven horses. He is painted red, to show that his glory is like flame; his three eyes represent the day, evening, and night; and his four arms indicate, that in him are united *prūkritēe* and *pooroooshū*, or matter and spirit. One lotus explains the nature of emancipation, (*see Vishnoo*;) and the other, upon which the rays of Sōōryū are reflected, is a type of sound, which some Hindoo philosophers believe to be eternal. The red lotus represents the earth; his chariot, the measure of time; and the seven horses, the seven poetical measures of the *védūs*. The image of this god is never made, but the sun itself is worshipped daily; the *shalgramū* is also his constant representative in the *bramhinical* worship. The disciples of this god are called *Sourūs*.

9. *Ugnee*, the regent of fire, is represented as a corpulent man, riding on a goat, with copper-coloured eye-brows, beard, hair, and eyes; his belly is the colour of the dawn; he holds a spear in his right hand, and a bead-roll in his left; from his body issue a thousand streams of glory, and he has seven flaming tongues. His corpulency points out, that he grants the desires of his worshippers; the colour of his eye-brows, &c. represents the flame of the burnt-offering when it ascends of a copper-colour, at which time he who desires secular blessings offers his clarified butter; but he who desires emancipation, pours his offering on the fire when its colour is like that of the dawn. The goat teaches, that *Ugnee* devours all things; his spear, that he is almighty; and his bead-roll, that he is propitious. The rays of glory are to encourage the worshipper to expect that he

⁷ The *pooranūs* contain a fable respecting Sōōryū and his wife, which almost literally corresponds with the filthy story of Neptune and Ceres, when the latter turned herself into a mare.

shall obtain the greatest blessings from this god. Ugnee has neither temples nor images consecrated to him, but has a service in the daily ceremonies of the bramhūns; and one class of his worshippers, called sagnikū bramhūns, preserve a perpetual fire like the vestal virgins². He presides over sacrifices, and is called the mouth of the gods.

10. *Pūvānū*, the god of the winds, and the messenger of the gods, is represented as a white man, sitting on a deer, holding in his right hand the hook used by the driver of an elephant. He is painted white, to shew that he preserves life. The deer represents the swiftness of his flight; the elephant driver's hook explains his power over the body. He is worshipped daily, but has neither separate festival, image, nor temple. I can find little or no resemblance betwixt this god and Mercury.

11. *Vāroonū*, the Indian Neptune, is a white man, sitting on a sea animal, having a serpent-weapon in his right hand. He is painted white, to shew that he satisfies the living; and he wields a terrific weapon, to point out, that he is approached with fear by the worshipper. His name is repeated in the daily worship of the bramhūns, but he has neither public festival nor temple.

12. *Sūmoodrū*, the sea, is worshipped by the Hindoos when they visit the sea, as well as at the different festivals, and on the sixth day after the birth of a child.

13. *Pṛi'hivēē*, the earth, is worshipped daily by the Hindoos. She is a form of *Bhūgūvūtēē*, and may be called the Indian Ceres. The Hindoos have divided the earth into ten parts, and assigned a deity to each. These are, *Indrū*, *Ugnee*, *Yūmū*,

² There seems to be no order of females among the Hindoos resembling these virgins; but many Hindoo women, at the total wane of the moon, to fulfil a vow, watch for twenty-four hours over a lamp made with clarified butter, and prevent its being extinguished till the time for the appearance of the new moon.

Noiritū, Vūroonū, Vayoo, Koovérū, Eeshū, Brūmha, and Unñtū.

14. *The heavenly bodies.* It is a remarkable fact, that almost all heathen nations have fallen into the worship of the heavenly bodies. Perhaps the evident influence which the sun and moon have over the seasons and the vegetable kingdom, might, in the primeval ages, lead men to make them objects of worship: after the introduction of judicial astrology, this species of idolatry becomes less surprising. Whatever may be the antiquity of the védūs, it is very plain, that the worship of the sun, moon, and other planets is there inculcated: many of the forms of praise and petition in those books, are addressed to the heavenly bodies; and to this day the worship of all the planets in one service, and of different planets on separate occasions, has place among the Hindoos.

Rūvee^a, the sun. See the article Sōōryū. *Somū^b, the moon.* We do not perceive the least agreement betwixt this god and Diana. The Hindoo feasts are regulated by the revolutions of the moon, but Somū is not greatly honoured in the Hindoo mythology, being esteemed a malignant planet, as is also *Mūngūlū^c, or Mars.* *Booddhū^d, or Mercury,* is a fortunate planet; and so is *Vrihūspūtee^e, or Jupiter,* who is the preceptor of the gods. *Shookrū^f, or Venus,* preceptor to the giants, is also a fortunate planet. This god is represented as blind of one eye. *Shūnee^g, or Saturn,* the son of Sōōryū, an evil planet. *Rahoo* and *Kétoo, the ascending and descending nodes.* The planets are not honoured with temples, images, or festivals in Bengal. When hope or fear, respecting their benign or malignant influence, is excited in the mind of a Hindoo, he is drawn or driven to worship them.

^a From this god the first day of the week is named Rūvee-varū, as Sunday derives its name from the Sun: day and varū are synonymous.

^b Hence Somū-varū, Monday.

^c Mūngūlū-varū, Tuesday.

^d Booddh-varū, Wednesday.

^e Vrihūspūtee-varū, Thursday.

^f Shookrū-varū, Friday.

^g Shūnee-varū, Saturday.

15. *Doorga*. The image of this goddess and that of *Minerva*, in one or two instances, exhibit a pretty strong resemblance: both are described as fond of arms; and it is remarkable, that *Doorga* derives her name from the giant *Doorgū*, whom she slew, as *Pallas* (*Minerva*) obtained hers from the giant *Pallas*, whom she destroyed. She resembles *Minerva* also as a goddess difficult of access, which is one signification of the name *Doorga*. Sir W. Jones says, 'As the mountain-born goddess, or *Parvūtēē*, she has many properties of the Olympian *Juno*: her majestic deportment, high spirit, and general attributes are the same; and we find her both on Mount *Koilasū*, and at the banquets of the deities, uniformly the companion of her husband. One circumstance in the parallel is extremely singular: she is usually attended by her son *Kartikéyū*, who rides on a peacock; and in some drawings, his own robe seems to be spangled with eyes: to which must be added that, in some of her temples, a peacock, without a rider, stands near her image.' The image of *Doorga* is that of a yellow female with ten arms, sitting on a lion. The weapons she wields, the trident, the scimitar, the discus, the arrow, the spear, the club, the bow, the serpent-weapon, the hook for guiding an elephant, and the axe, are to point out, that with these ten arms and weapons she protects the ten points. She has one foot on *Müheshū*, a giant, to shew that she subdues the enemies of her worshippers; and she sits on a lion, a form of *Vishnoo*, as the giver of success to her worshippers, and as exciting fear in their enemies. The quarrels of this goddess with *Shivū*, her husband, strongly remind us of those betwixt *Jupiter* and *Juno*, arising from the jealousy of the latter. The festivals in honour of *Doorga* and of *Krishnū* draw the whole Hindoo population to the temples, while those in honour of other gods are comparatively neglected. Before the temples of this goddess, thousands of victims are annually slaughtered, and offered to her image. She is not merely honoured as *Doorga*, but, under other names, distinct temples, images, festivals, and ceremonies have been instituted. *Doorga*, as has been already observed, is also the representative of matter in the creation of the universe, and in this character she is called *Prū-*

kritee^b. Her wars with the giants also add to her fame, and make her extremely popular among the Hindoos: she is adopted by many, who take the name of *shaktüs*ⁱ, as their guardian deity. In Bengal, the greater number of bramhüns are shaktüs: in the western and southern provinces this sect is less numerous.

16. *Kalee*, the Indian Diana Taurica. Though this is another form of Doorga, her fame is so great, that it seems necessary to devote a few lines exclusively to her. The dark image of this goddess is a truly horrid figure: her hair is disheveled; her tongue hangs out; she holds in one hand a scimitar, in another a giant's skull, with another she forbids fear, and with the last is bestowing a blessing. Her colour is that by which time is designated, and she stands upon her husband, the destroyer, to keep him in subjection till the time of the universal conflagration, when, with the eye in the centre of his forehead, he will burn the universe. Her four arms represent the four védüs; the two inspiring terror point out those portions of the védü which relate to the destruction of enemies and the government of the world, and the other two allude to those parts of the védü which belong to devotion. Her disheveled hair represents the clouds, and intimates too that time has neither beginning nor end. Her tongue is the representative of lightning. She exhibits altogether the appearance of a drunken frantic fury. Yet this is the goddess whom thousands adore, on whose altars thousands of victims annually bleed, and whose temple at Kalêe-ghatü, near Calcutta, is the resort of Hindoos from all parts of India. This temple, it is said, frequently receives presents from persons of the highest rank, and not unfrequently from persons called Christians. There are two things respecting Kalêe which remind us of Laverna: she is the protectress of thieves, and her image at Kalêe-ghatü is a head without a body. Another form of this goddess, under the name of Siddhêshwüree, is to be seen in clay temples all over Bengal. Human victims, it is said, have often been immolated on the altars of Kalêe and Siddhêshwüree.

^b Literally, the chief, or nature.

ⁱ Shaktü means energy.

17. *Lūkshmēē*, the goddess of fortune, is the wife of Vishnoo: she is said to have been produced at the churning of the sea, as Venus was said to be born of the froth of the sea. At her birth, all the gods were enamoured of her. She is painted yellow, with a water-lily in her right hand; (in which form she is worshipped frequently by Hindoo women;) but no bloody sacrifices are offered to her. The Hindoos avoid all payments of money on the Thursday, (*Lūkshmēē-varū*), from the fear of offending this goddess.

18. *Sūrūswūtēē*, the goddess of learning, another wife of Vishnoo. She is painted white, and stands on the water-lily. In some images she is seen holding a lute; and in others as possessed of three eyes, with a fan in one hand and a book in the other. Her colour is to point out, that she is the source of wisdom; the lute reminds the worshipper that she is the author of melody; her three eyes represent the three *védūs*; the book and pen obviously belong to her character as the goddess of learning. I find no goddess in the Roman or Grecian pantheon who resembles her. She has an annual festival, when clay images are set up, and worshipped all over Bengal. Some of her worshippers, on the last day of the festival, dance naked before the procession of the image through the streets. Even prostitutes, at this festival, make an image of this goddess, and set it up near their houses, to draw the spectators to their brothels. On this day students, merchants, and others, refuse to touch a pen; for the Hindoos ascribe their ability to read, write, and even to speak, to the favour of *Sūrūswūtēē*.

19. *Shēētūla*, the goddess who cools the body when afflicted with the small-pox, receives many honours from the lower orders of Hindoos, among whom the ravages of the small-pox are often dreadful. This goddess is also worshipped to procure the removal of cutaneous diseases.

20. *Mūnūsa*, the queen of the snakes, or she who protects men.

from their fatal bite. The lower orders crowd to the three annual festivals held in honour of this goddess.

21. *Shūshṭ'hēē*, the goddess of fecundity. She is honoured with six annual festivals, celebrated chiefly by females. Her image is that of a yellow woman, sitting on a cat, and nursing a child; though, in general, a rough stone, painted on the top, and placed under a tree, is the object worshipped.

These may be considered as the *celestial deities* worshipped by the Hindoos. The *terrestrial goddesses* are, *Sēēta*, the wife of *Ramū^k*; *Radha*, the mistress of *Krishnū*; *Rookminēē* and *Sūt-yū-bhama*, the wives of *Krishnū*; and *Soobhūdra*, the sister of *Jūgūnnat'hū^l*. The *terrestrial gods* are the following:—

1. *Krishnū* resembles Apollo in his licentious intrigues; in his being a herdsman^m, and an archer; in his destroying a dreadful serpent; in his love of music; and in the celebrity to which he attained. *Krishnū*'s image is that of a black man, with a flute in his hand. His colour points out, that he fills the mind with sensual desires, and the flute designates him as the author of musical sounds. Apollo had in one hand a harp, and in the other a shield of arrows. The history of *Krishnū* is chiefly found in the *Shrēē-Bhagūvūtū*; the outline of which will be seen in vol. i. p. 193, &c. Several festivals in honour of this god are held annually, at which times the greatest licentiousness prevails among all ranks. A great proportion of the Hindoo population in Bengal are devoted to *Krishnū*ⁿ. His intrigues with the

^k This goddess, it is said, was dug out of the ground by king *Jūtūkū*, when he was ploughing his field. A boy who was ploughed up out of the ground among the Tuscans, gave rise to the order of Roman priests, whose business it was to divine from appearances in the annual sacrifice.

^l It does not appear that *Jūgūnnat'hū* was ever married.

^m The *pooranis* contain a story of this god much resembling that of Mercury's stealing a cow from Apollo. In the Hindoo fable, *Brūhma* is the thief.

ⁿ Sometimes Hindoos are seen licking up the very dust of the place